

State of Vermont
Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living

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| Protocol: Respiratory Protection Program Protocol | Protocol #: 9 |
| Applicable to: DAIL | Issue Date: |
| Issued by: Monica Caserta Hutt | Revision #: |
| Authorizing Signature: | Revision Date: |

Overview

The mission of the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL) is to make Vermont the best place in which to grow old or to live with a disability – with dignity, respect, and independence. Fulfilment of our mission requires the optimal health and safety of employees both as individuals and as professionals responsible for helping Vermonters live fuller, healthier lives.

DAIL administers a Respiratory Protection Program for designated employees, and visitors and complies with the [Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(VOSHA\) respiratory protection requirements](#). This program applies to all employees who are required to wear respirators during normal work operations.

Under this protocol, the Respiratory Protection Program is centralized under the Operations Unit within the Commissioner’s Office. It is reviewed by the AHS Safety Committee, under the AHS Emergency Management Director, on an annual basis. The Vermont Department of Health (VDH) maintains a separate Respiratory Protection Program for their staff. This protocol applies specifically to DAIL. There are two Program Administrators, and a Respiratory Protection Committee charged with developing and updating procedures, and ensuring that employees have appropriate respiratory protection knowledge, training, and equipment to safely and efficiently deploy to areas and situations where any kind of respiratory hazard may exist.

DAIL’s Director of Operations, Program Administrators and Respiratory Protection Committee are responsible for the development of the Respiratory Protection Program protocol and procedures. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Respiratory Protection Committee and updated to reflect any changes in OSHA standards and any conditions that may affect the program. This protocol is not intended to supersede any day to day operational program(s) already in place. It is meant to provide direction to employees and align with other safety programs such as those for Hazard Communication and Blood Borne Pathogens.

Procedures:

The Respiratory Protection Committee is responsible for establishing procedures that ensure that all DAIL employees are protected from exposure to respiratory hazards. The procedures established shall be in compliance with the [Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(VOSHA\)](#)

The procedure documents can be found on the DAILIntranet, linked here.

Documentation and Recordkeeping

A written copy of this protocol, procedures and the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard shall be kept electronically on the DAIL Intranet. Copies of training and fit test records are maintained by Division Directors or Program Managers for their staff who wear respiratory protection. These records will be updated as new employees are trained, as existing employees receive refresher training, and as new fit tests are conducted. For employees covered under the Respiratory Protection Program, the Program Administrators shall maintain copies of any physician's written recommendation regarding each employee's ability to wear a respirator. The completed medical questionnaires and evaluating physician's documented findings will remain confidential in a locked file cabinet located in a designated Respiratory Protection Program Administrator's office and be treated as HIPAA compliant documents.

Responsibilities:

Director of Operations

- Ensures that the department maintains a Respiratory Protection Program, policy, and procedures.
- Verifies any changes to the policy and/or procedures guides the review by the Department of Human Resources Manager and the Department Legal Unit.
- Collaborates with other state departments and agencies on their respiratory protection programs.
- Ensures financial resources for the program.
- Ensures that all electronic and hard copy records are managed in accordance with the department records management program.

Program Administrator(s)/Respiratory Protection Committee

- Administers the Respiratory Protection Program.
- Ensures that procedures are current and posted on the department Intranet.
- Leads the annual review of policy, procedures with committee.
- Communicates any issues and/or concerns of the program with the Director of Operations.
- Maintains electronic and hard copy records required of the program.
- Ensures training is provided to employees of respirator use, selection, storage, fitting, limitations, disposal and responsibilities.
- Defines worker exposure for hazards.
- Assists in training of new respiratory protection committee members to understand the charge of the committee and responsibilities of the Respiratory Protection Program.
- Conducts an annual audit of the Respiratory Protection Program.
- Assures DAIL employees understand and follow the respiratory program, respirator use, selection, storage, fitting, limitations, disposal, and responsibilities.
- Arranges for, and/or conduct "train the trainer" instruction for designated staff

- Ensures that records required are maintained in a manner that documents all facets of the program.
- Evaluates the respiratory protection program's effectiveness annually and update as needed.
- Completes any updates needed and communicate those changes as needed.
- Develops and maintains a training approach to those conducting fit testing, medical evaluation and training.

Division Directors

Responsible for determining what specific jobs require the use of respiratory protective equipment. Management must also provide proper respiratory protective equipment to meet the needs of each specific application and provide appropriate training and instructions on all equipment.

DAIL Department Leaders

- Coordinate yearly fit testing for identified staff.
- Responsible for ensuring all employees under their supervision needing respiratory protection in the course of their work are knowledgeable of the respiratory protection requirements in their work.
- Ensuring staff falling under the respiratory protection protocol read through the protocol and procedure.
- Comply with all facets of the Respiratory Protection Program.
- Coordinate with employees and supervisors on appropriate respirators based upon job responsibilities.
- Concentra will communicate with DAIL DHR when an employee is not approved.
- DAIL DHR will communicate with staff member's supervisor and discuss options for staff member.
- A staff member who is referred to her/his primary medical provider for follow up clearance during N95 Fit Testing will have any co-pays for the visit to the provider re-imbursed through the states expense reporting system. The staff member will also be paid for her/his time during the primary medical providers assessment.

Employees

- Responsible to have an awareness of the respiratory protection requirements for their job responsibilities.
- Responsible for wearing the appropriate respiratory protective equipment according to manufacturer instructions and for maintaining the equipment in a clean and operable condition.

Respiratory Program Definitions per OSHA (not all applicable for DAIL use)

Air-Purifying Respirator- a respirator with an air-purifying filter, cartridge, or canister that removes specific air contaminants by passing ambient air through the air-purifying element.

Assigned Protection Factor (APF)- workplace level of respiratory protection that a respirator or class of respirators is expected to provide to employees.

Atmosphere-Supplying Respirator- respirator that supplies the respirator user with breathing air from a source independent of the ambient atmosphere and includes supplied-air respirators (SARs) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) units.

Canister or Cartridge- container with a filter, sorbent, or catalyst, or combination of these items, which removes specific contaminants from the air passed through the container.

Demand Respirator means an atmosphere-supplying respirator that admits breathing air to the facepiece only when a negative pressure is created inside the facepiece by inhalation.

Emergency Situation means any occurrence such as, but not limited to, equipment failure, rupture of containers, or failure of control equipment that may or does result in an uncontrolled significant release of an airborne contaminant.

Employee Exposure means exposure to a concentration of an airborne contaminant that would occur if the employee were not using respiratory protection.

End-of-Service-Life Indicator (ESLI)- a system that warns the respirator user of the approach of the end of adequate respiratory protection, for example, that the sorbent is approaching saturation or is no longer effective.

Escape-Only Respirator- a respirator intended to be used only for emergency exit.

Filter or Air Purifying Element- a component used in respirators to remove solid or liquid aerosols from the inspired air.

Filtering Facepiece (dust mask)- a negative pressure particulate respirator with a filter as an integral part of the facepiece or with the entire facepiece composed of the filtering medium.

Fit Factor- a quantitative estimate of the fit of a particular respirator to a specific individual, and typically estimates the ratio of the concentration of a substance in ambient air to its concentration inside the respirator when worn.

Fit Test- the use of a protocol to qualitatively or quantitatively evaluate the fit of a respirator on an individual. (See also Qualitative fit test QLFT and Quantitative fit test QNFT.)

Fit Tester: trained staff who are charged with coordinating and conducting yearly fit testing with employees.

Helmet Means- a rigid respiratory inlet covering that also provides head protection against impact and penetration.

High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter- a filter that is at least 99.97% efficient in removing monodisperse particles of 0.3 micrometers in diameter. The equivalent NIOSH 42 CFR 84 particulate filters are the N100, R100, and P100 filters.

Hood- a respiratory inlet covering that completely covers the head and neck and may also cover portions of the shoulders and torso.

Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH)- an atmosphere that poses an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects, or would impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.

Interior Structural Firefighting- the physical activity of fire suppression, rescue, or both, inside of buildings or enclosed structures which are involved in a fire situation beyond the incipient stage. (See 29 CFR 1910.155)

Loose-Fitting Facepiece- a respiratory inlet covering that is designed to form a partial seal with the face.

Maximum Use Concentration (MUC)- the maximum atmospheric concentration of a hazardous substance from which an employee can be expected to be protected when wearing a respirator. When no OSHA exposure limit is available for a hazardous substance, the Health Department must determine an MUC on the basis of relevant available information and informed professional judgment.

N95 Mask- Respiratory protective device designed to achieve a very close facial fit and efficient filtration of airborne particles. The N95 designation means that when subjected to careful testing, the respirator blocks at least 95 percent of very small (0.3 micron) test particles.

Negative pressure respirator- (tight fitting) a respirator in which the air pressure inside the facepiece is negative during inhalation with respect to the ambient air pressure outside the respirator.

Oxygen Deficient Atmosphere- an atmosphere with an oxygen content below 19.5% by volume.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)- the federal agency authorized to ensure safe and healthful working conditions by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education, and assistance.

Physician or other licensed health care professional (PLHCP)- an individual whose legally permitted scope of practice (*i.e.*, license, registration, or certification) allows him or her to independently provide, or be delegated the responsibility to provide, some or all the health care services required by this Program.

Positive Pressure Respirator- a respirator in which the pressure inside the respiratory inlet covering exceeds the ambient air pressure outside the respirator.

Powered Air-purifying Respirator (PAPR)- means an air-purifying respirator that uses a blower to force the ambient air through air-purifying elements to the inlet covering.

Pressure Demand Respirator- a positive pressure atmosphere-supplying respirator that admits breathing air to the facepiece when the positive pressure is reduced inside the facepiece by inhalation.

Qualitative Fit Test (QLFT)- a pass/fail fit test to assess the adequacy of respirator fit that relies on the individual's response to the test agent.

Quantitative Fit Test (QNFT)- an assessment of the adequacy of respirator fit by numerically measuring the amount of leakage into the respirator.

Respiratory Inlet Covering- portion of a respirator that forms the protective barrier between the user's respiratory tract and an air-purifying device or breathing air source, or both. It may be a facepiece, helmet, hood, suit, or a mouthpiece respirator with nose clamp.

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)- atmosphere-supplying respirator for which the breathing air source is designed to be carried by the user.

Service Life- time period that a respirator, filter or sorbent, or other respiratory equipment provides adequate protection to the wearer.

Supplied-air Respirator (SAR) or Airline Respirator- an atmosphere-supplying respirator for which the source of breathing air is not designed to be carried by the user.

Tight-Fitting Facepiece- a respiratory inlet covering that forms a complete seal with the face.

User Seal Check- an action conducted by the respirator user to determine if the respirator is properly seated to the face.

Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration (VOSHA) - A division of the Vermont of Labor, responsible for the protection, health, and safety of working Vermonters.

Revision History

| Date | Summary of Revisions |
|-------------|--|
| 9/17/2020 | Modified from VDH protocol by Tim Wilcox, Monica White |
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